



Central Naugatuck Valley

HELP, Inc.

900 Watertown Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06708 Phone/Fax 203-756-8984

Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee:

Re: Governor's Proposed Budget for Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Submitted By: Roberta Murtagh, Executive Director, C.N.V. Help, Inc.

February 23, 2017

Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Roberta Murtagh, Executive Director of C.N.V. Help, Inc. We have operated DMHAS funded programs since 1970 in Waterbury and Torrington to provide crucial services to individuals with substance dependence and/or psychiatric disorders. Last year our agency served almost 1,400 individuals and their families.

I would like to share my concerns with the Governor's proposed budget. In particular, I wanted to express my grave concerns to the funding reductions in the human service areas of this budget.

First of all, the cuts to the Regional Mental Health Boards (RMHB) could be devastating from both a service system perspective and from a fiscal view. The RMHB and the Regional Action Council (RAC) provide needs assessments, planning and evaluation of services, and an avenue for representation of clients and family members along with communities to participate in the system and support each other. The state funding enables the state to receive \$23 million from the federal government, and are required components of the federal application process.

In addition, the proposed cuts to the DMHAS budget, especially the cuts to the grants for substance abuse and mental health treatment would be devastating to the clients we serve, the staff members we employ and the entire mental health system. While I fully realize that you have an incredibly difficult job ahead of you and heartbreaking decisions that must be made, I respectfully request that you restore the cuts to protect the people that we serve and to retain the critical programs that save lives and help to keep individuals out of far more expensive alternatives such as prisons, state hospitals and emergency departments. Our agency already faced over \$1.2 million in cuts between July 1st and October 1st of 2016. We can't continue to provide the essential services without adequate funding. As members of the Appropriations Committee work toward creating your 'Recommended Budget' for SFY16 and 17, I urge you to put the people in Connecticut first.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

Contact information: Roberta Murtagh, C.N.V. Help, Inc., 900 Watertown Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708, (203) 756-8984 x103, rmurtagh@cnvhelp.org